



# Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

For immediate release: Dec. 18, 2003 (03-58)

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## **State proposes action at three sites to keep European gypsy moth out of Washington**

OLYMPIA – The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) is proposing action this spring to prevent the European gypsy moth from becoming established in three Western Washington locations. Control measures are called for when a reproducing population of gypsy moths is present. The locations are an 18-acre site at Port Ludlow in Jefferson County, an 11-acre site in Bellevue, and a 15-acre site near Mayfield in Lewis County.

State entomologists believe reproducing populations of gypsy moth are present in all three communities and are recommending that the sites be treated with a biological insecticide to eradicate the infestations. Each treatment would be applied using ground-based equipment.

The gypsy moth is one of the worst forest pest insects ever brought into the U.S. It attacks more than 500 species of trees and shrubs, causing millions of dollars of environmental and economic damage in the U.S. annually. The moth is permanently established in 19 states in the East and Upper Midwest.

Gypsy moth has been detected in Washington state every year since 1977, but permanent populations have not been established because of consistent trapping and eradication programs.

“We’ve kept permanent populations of the moth out of the state for 29 years,” said Jim Marra, managing entomologist with WSDA. “We want that record to continue.”

Residents whose properties are affected by the proposal to treat for gypsy moths will receive written information from the state Department of Agriculture. In addition, open houses will be held in Port Ludlow, Bellevue, and Mayfield in early February.

Before the action is approved, the state Department of Agriculture will comply with the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

WSDA will consult with other state and federal agencies regarding the proposed treatments, plus prepare documents for public review and comments that assess the impact of the proposal on the environment. Two of the documents are a SEPA checklist and a NEPA draft environmental assessment.

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### **Gypsy moth catches and other evidence**

Of the 59 gypsy moths caught in the state last summer, 21 were found in the Bellevue, 14 in Port Ludlow, and eight in Mayfield.

In addition, three egg masses, pupal cases, cast skins, and a dead female gypsy moth were detected in Port Ludlow; six gypsy moth egg masses and pupal cases were detected in Bellevue; and three pupal cases and one cast skin were detected in Mayfield.

The biological insecticide WSDA proposes to use is *Bacillus thuringiensis* var. *kurstaki* (*Btk*), the same insecticide used in recent years to keep Washington state free of gypsy moths. The active ingredient in a biological insecticide is found naturally in the environment. *Btk* is registered for use in the U.S. by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and has a proven safety record.

If the proposal to treat for the gypsy moth is approved, the first of three treatments, applied seven to 14 days apart, will occur in late April or early May.

For more information, citizens may call the department's toll-free hotline (1-800-443-6684) or visit its Web site at [www.agr.wa.gov](http://www.agr.wa.gov) and click on "Gypsy Moth."

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